CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

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The Gaffney Street Red Gums

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Box 324 Castlemaine

THE MONTH OF AUGUST AT CAMPBELLS CREEK

by Terry Collins

No need to remind Field Nats that Spring is here with all kinds of Wattles out but the timetable is askew with other plants. No sign of the Tetratheca even budding although according to notes it has bloomed here as early as June 23rd, 1980. Rice Flowers are budding and plenty of Scented Sundews are out.

The first Pallid Cuckoo arrived Aug 23rd, which is at least two weeks early to other years. The Grey Goshawk was back; this time the victim was a Yellow-rumped Thornbill. For a while the nights have been filled with the monotonous call of the Owlet Nightjar among the trees along the ridge at the back of the house. Also there is a Magpie suffering from "Insomnia". All night long it carols,moonlight or darkness and only ceasing as daylight begins. First visit for two years of a New Holland Honeyeater, but it only stayed around the bottle for two days. Maybe the White-eared Honeyeaters who dominate the scene drove it away, although they cannot beat off the Spinebills.

The hares are still around moving into cover each morning. There is evidence of a Kangaroo or Wallaby in our small paddock. Maybe I'll get a sighting early one morning. As I finish this, two Jacky Winters have landed on the power line.

THE KOOYOORA STATE PARK

FROM PARKWATCH

Once the home of the Jaara tribe of North-central Victoria, the Kooyoora State Park is one of Victoria's newest parks. The name Jaara is believed to come from the name Jajawurong, which refers to the language which was spoken by the group of tribes which inhabited that area of Victoria before white settlement.

The area contains a number of different woodland environments, including the Boulder strewn ranges clothed with Long-leaved Box, Yellow Box and Red Ironbark, Granite domes and clefts with their mossy cover the moist upward slopes of the hill gum woodlands with the beautiful Blakeley's Gums, Shrublands of Wallowa and BLack Wattle, the Grasslands and Savannah of the River Red Gum flats, Rocky Sandstone areas bearing Grey and Yellow Box and various wattles, and of course the rock shelters of the Jaara.

A visit to the area is recommended, particularly in the Spring or the Autumn. There may be seen 5 different types of Aboriginal relics.

1. The Kangderaar Stone Arrangement.

This consists of granite pieces piled in a boomerang shape to form

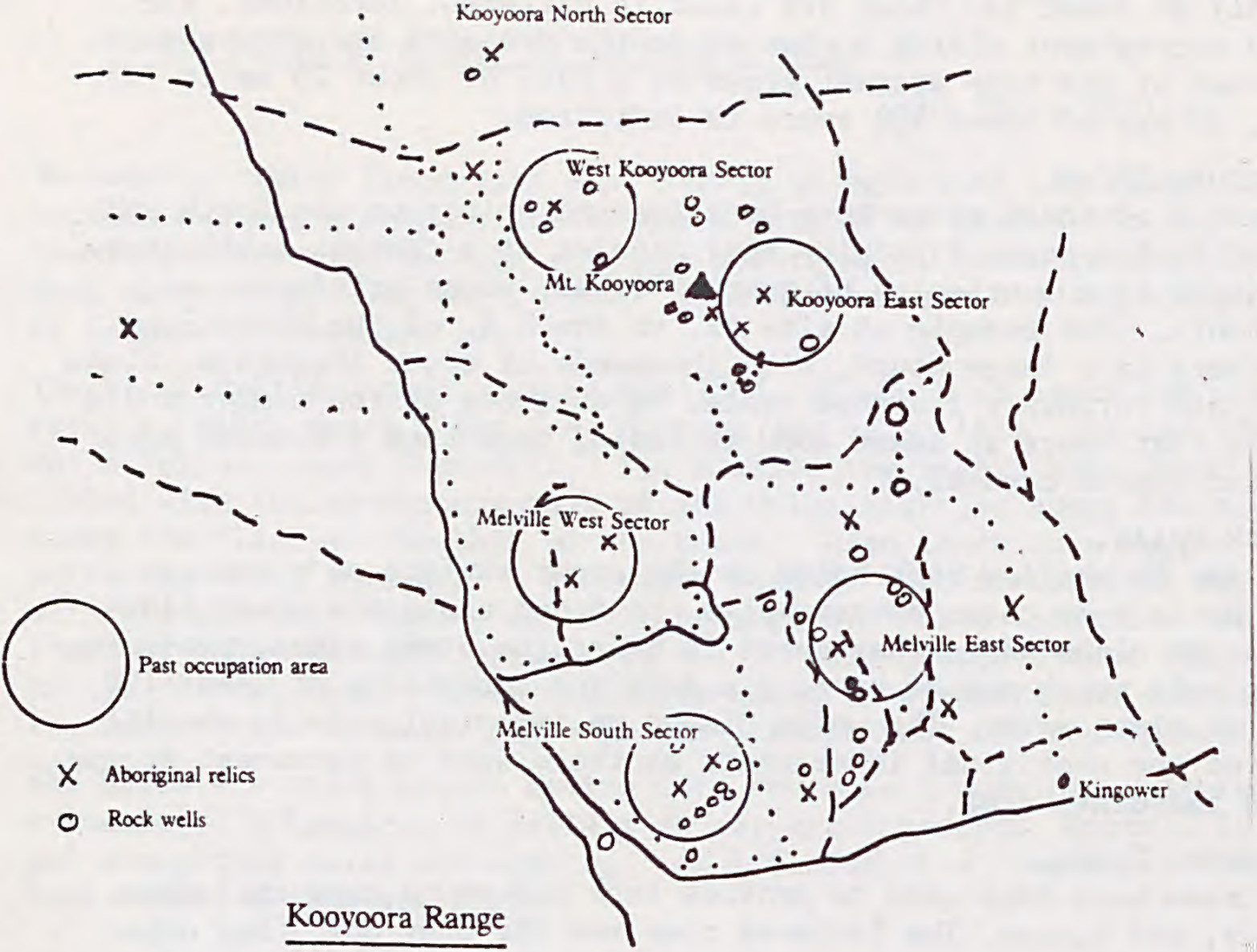
a granite wall enclosing or sheltering a sacred ceremonial area. Probably at least 120 rocks are piled in different locations, the lichen encrustment giving a clue as to the probable age of the work. As lichen of the type present grows at a rate of about 25 mm in 125 years, an age of about 500 years is indicated.

2. Factory Sites.
At least 7 of these sites have been located mainly to the South and S.E. of Mt Kooyoora. Typically they consist of a central anvil stone surrounded by a scattering of quartz flakes, rough artefacts, and some tools. For example at site #2, to the S.E. of the White Swan Mine there is a large mound, with thousands of stone fragments, flake cores, and variously finished tools. An estimate of the number would suggest that there at least 4000 including more than a hundred made of clear quartz crystal.

3. Rock Wells.
These may be shallow rock holes on the upper surface of a granite slab, or in some cases deeper wells are found along the steep sides of granite slabs where they curve in under the steep sides, producing a deep well which may be up to 2 m deep and containing at least 100 litre of clean water. The wells played an important role in the life-style of the aboriginal inhabitants as there were no permanent stream in the immediate area.

4. Scarred Trees.
Many trees have been used to provide bark pieces to make coolamons, shields, and canoes. The favoured tree was the Grey Box , but other boxes and Red Gums were also utilized. Several dozen are to be found in the area to the S. and E. of Melville Caves.
A new group was found in October 1982, including a Grey box with a 4 metre girth. A canoe scar had been removed measuring 2.27 m in length. This tree has been recorded by the Vicoriian Archeological Survey.

5. Rock Shelters.
The layers of rock particles and ash in the floors of some of these show evidence of habitation over several periods. Tools numbering at least 1950 have been located. Whereas the local stone is mainly coarse granite and white quartz, the tools are variously made of flint, chert, quartz, quartzite. Shapes of the fragments include:- Quartz crescents, Bondi Points, Sorcerers stones and various types of scraper. The shelters were apparently used to shelter from the cold S. and S.W. winds during cold weather, in Summer the tribes moved out onto the flats near the Loddon River.
The stone artefacts are of microlithic origin which means that they are not older than 5,300 years. It is possible that even older relis may be found when the deeper layers in the shelters are investigated thoroughly.



What to do on a Two Day Holiday

One suggestion I would offer is 'Go to Horsham.' We spent a couple of nights there at the beginning of this week (late August) and, despite the fact we were still both bothered by a cold, we enjoyed ourselves very much, even though we couldn't do as much walking as we would have liked.

The choice for a day's outing was a hard one to make - should we head down the road to Mount Zero and Flat Rock? or the Rocklands reservoir? or perhaps we could head out through Natimuk and Gymbowen and up to Nhill (a beautiful drive through Little Desert Country)? or perhaps we should go up the road to Dimboola and the Little Desert National Park, where we have visited several times to see the progress after the fires 8 or 9 years ago? or would we go out to Arapiles and Mitre Rock?

We decided on the last, not really knowing what to expect , though we had visited Mitre Rock and climbed it once before. We bought some odds and ends for a picnic lunch and set off along the Edenhope road.

We'd been travelling through wheat and sheep country, so the sudden change to trees and scrub as we turned into the Arapiles Park was a lovely surprise. Already there were a few different wattles out, including a very attractive pale flowered one just after we went in to the park. We stopped on the way up and found the lovely Flame Heath in flower. There was also lots of the Rock Fern. Up near the lookout Common Heath and Fairy Wax were out, and there were lots of shrubs, including a mintbush, still to come.

There is a magnificent view from the lookout. There's a short, not particularly strenuous climb and the lookout area is fenced (I still got weird sensations in the soles of my feet though!).

FLAME HEATH

We called at Mitre Rock and afterwards decided to detour a short distance and visit Lake Natimuk. What a pleasant surprise that proved to be. There were thousands of birds on the Lake, from the little Hoary Headed Grebe to the great Pelican. We were able to drive right around the lake after spending quite some time at the Camping and Picnic Ground.

On the way home the next day we rounded off a very enjoyabe couple of days with a stopover at Melville Caves. There was very little in flower, but its so pleasant there, and the terrain so interesting, that it is still worth a visit.

Rita Mills

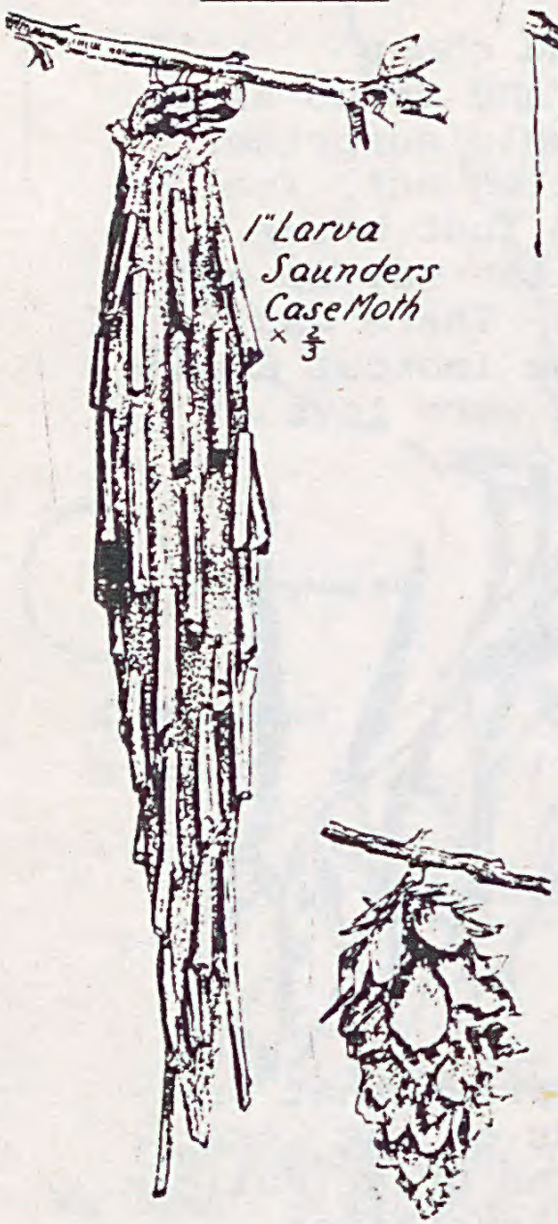
Another Superstition :

CUCKOO : Usually lucky, the cuckoo tells us that Spring has arrived. It is lucky to hear its call when you are up and dressed but not if you are still in bed. If the call comes from right or front it is a sign of good luck, but if it is the left or behind, bad luck.

Some Common Insect Pests of Trees

by Terry Collins

1. Case Moths



Case moth cocoons are usually ornamented on the surface with short pieces of twigs or leaves, The larvae usually concealled within pulls the case around as it feeds, its head and thorax only protruding from the case. Seldom do these insects cause serious defoliation. Only the adult male of the case moth is winged, the female moth remaining in the case to lay its eggs. The young caterpillars on emerging from the egg make their way on to the foliage where they commence to feed and construct their own cases.

2, Cup Moths

The name of this insect is derived from the cup-like pupal case. The moth emerges from the pupal case by displacing the circular top section

The female lays her eggs on the host plant, covering them with a fine fur-like material. When the young larvae hatch they skeletonise the leaf, and as they grow, the entire leaf may be consumed. If abundant, these insects may defoliate trees over a large area. During the early larval stages they are gregarious, but later they may feed singly. The larvae, of different colours are characterised by having four clusters of small spines near each end of the body; and it is these spines which produce skin irritations when contacted. When fully grown the larvae construct these pupal chambers on small twigs or among debris near the tree.

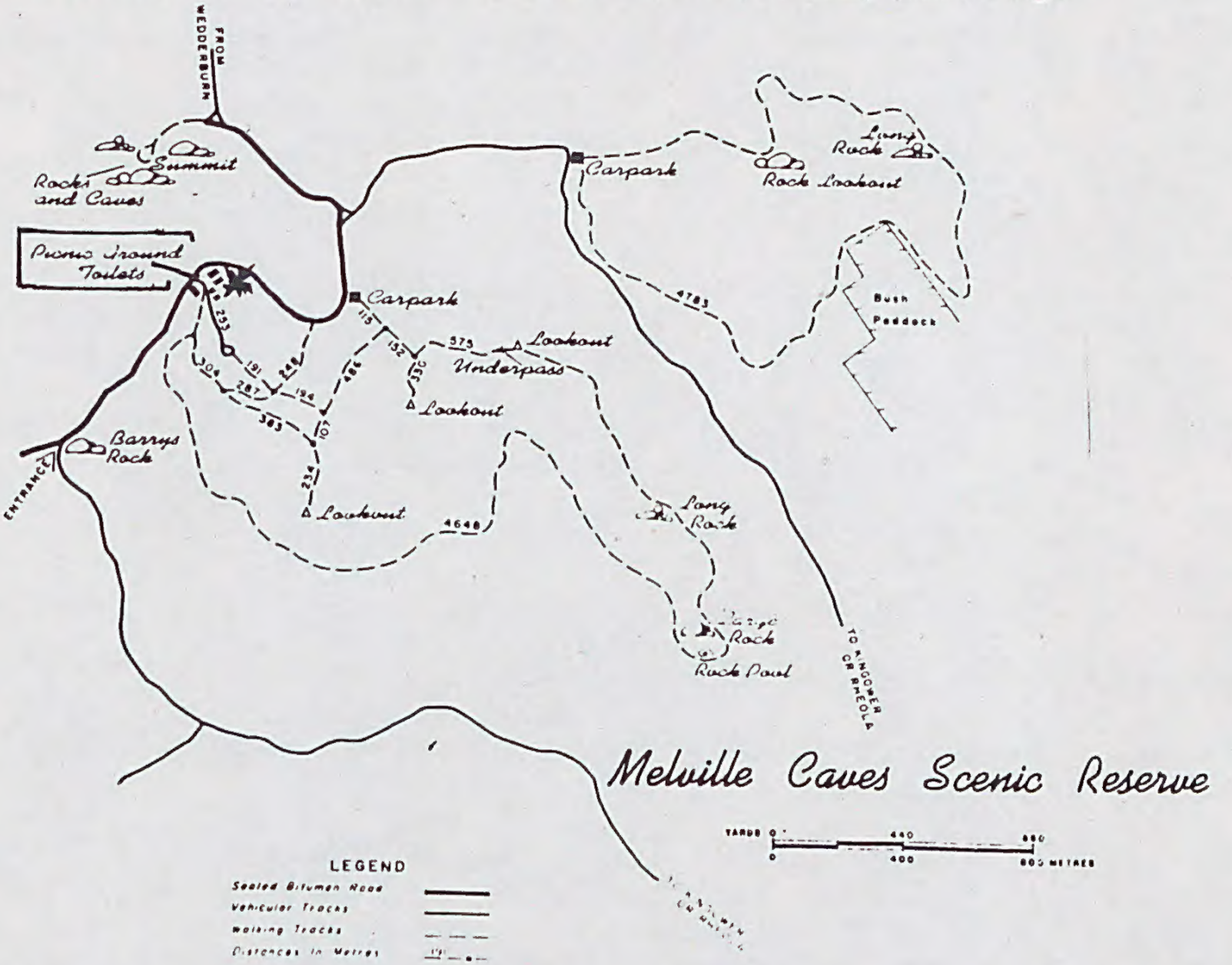
Continued next month

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Visitors are invited to attend the Club's sessions.
Excursions leave promptly at the times shown.
Meetings are held at the High School in room 321

Fri 13 Sept IN THE PATH OF BARON VON MUELLER. Address by Dr J. Willis at 8.30 in room 321. The Castlemaine High School Art exhibition will be on display from 7.30 in roo 309, with the official opening at 8.00 p.m.

Sept 13-15 MELVILLE CAVES Campout arranged by Ballarat F.N.C. Camp near public facilities (see map). Initial meeting is at 10.30 a.m. on the Saturday morning.



Sat/Sun 5/6 Oct NATIVE FLOWER SHOW coducted by the Bendig Native Plant Group. Strathdale Community Centre, Crook St Sat 11-6, Sun 10-5. Adults $2,Concession $1.

C.F.N.C. AGENDA (cont)

Sat/Sun 5/6 Oct MARYBOROUGH - V.F.N.C.A. campout. Meet at Maryborough P.O. at 1.30 p.m. for excursion to Paddy's Ranges and reservoir. Casserole Tea at Club Rooms ($4). On Sunday, meet at Maryborough P.O. at 9.00 for local bush/birds, or Aboriginal Wells and Vics largest quartz reef. BBQ lunch.

Fri 11 Oct BIRDS IN CALIFORNIA talk by Dr Pat Bingham.

Sat 12 Oct Excursion to President Jack's Secret Place. Meet at SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30 p.m.

Sat/Sun 26/27 October. COLAC - W.V.F.N.C.A. Campout. This is the 25th anniversary of the W.V.F.N.C.A. Sat- Bus tour ($4) of Otway Rain Forest, Triplet Falls and Carlisle Heathlands. BBQ lunch ($3). Evening meeting is 25th anniversary meeting with program by member clubs. Sun- Annual meeting of W.V.F.N.C.A. and local excursions.

TUES 5 Nov. REDESDALE WALK The annual walk is being held in on Cup Day. An all day walk in the Redesdale Forest. Leave from S.E.C., Mostyn St at 9.15 a.m. Leader is E. Perkins.

Sat 9 Nov. Excursion with Bird Observers Club. Leader is M. Oliver. Meet 10.30 a.m. at the Market Car Park.

Sat 14 Dec FRYERS RIDGE. Leave SEC, Mostyn St at 1.30.

Feb 1986. BENDIGO SETTLING PONDS with Maryborough F.N.C.

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WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON EXCURSIONS.

We will again be holding Wedneday afternoon excursions. Meet promptly at 4.15 at the place named.

Wed 18 Sept GOWER SCHOOL. Leader Maggie Oliver.
Wed 25 Sept KALIMNA (Meet at corner of Hunter St & Kalimna Tourist Rd). Leader is Ian Higgins.
Wed 2 Oct BIRDS (cr Mostyn & Kennedy St) Stan Bruton
Wed 9 Oct KAWEKA (cr Turner & Hargreaves St. Frank Blake
Wed 16 Oct BOTANIC GARDENS (car park at end of Rose Garden) Leader is K. Turner.
Wed 23 Oct - GUILDFORD (Guildford Store) B. Perry.